Beat: Lifestyle

WASHINGTON MODEL MAKES AUSTRALIA HER HOME

Marketing yourself well is everything

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USPA NEWS - “I first became interested in modelling while living in the US in 2009. A friend of my mother's was a magazine editor and wanted to use me as the cover model. So I can honestly say that my first paid modelling gig was for a cover“, said Sarah

As a “˜fresh face´ in Australia Sarah decided to follow her passion and creativity in modelling. “I love networking with image artists and creatives. When you are marketing yourself there are so many options in how to make the work personal.“ Explained Sarah. She went on to say,“ I like to have fun at my shoots and make it a memorable experience for both the photographic team and the fashion client.“ Sarah moved to Melbourne five years ago on a de-facto partner visa. She was born in Washington State in the United States, just south of Canada. I asked her if living in Melbourne was challenging as an international model living away from home and her lifelong network?
“ I love Melbourne as it's such a vibrant creative hub and a culturally diverse city, not to mention the fashion capital of Australia! I'm a traveller at heart. I've lived in Ecuador and in Japan before settling in Melbourne. There are always challenges in living and establishing yourself overseas, but the rewards are endless, I'm more of a patient and self-reliant person as a result. I do look forward to my visits back home. Also, I would jump on any paid gig to NYC, as I've already got my work visa sorted!“, laughs the very cheeky Sarah.

I asked Sarah what her current goals are and where she wants to be in 2 years? “Every day I'm refining my craft. As far as my career goes, I definitely would love to be heading towards the international level of modelling. I am especially interested in collaborating with local and Australian designers to showcase their talents in order to increase Australian representation to Asian and European fashion buyers.“ Said the enthusiastic Sarah , (who talks with a crisp accent with a cross over American, Canadian, British and Australian freshness).
Sarah Elizabeth like so many professional models has an amazing portfolio. I asked Sarah why it was so difficult to get paid work in Australia. “ Thank you very much“ said Sarah, “I'm lucky to have worked with photographers who are very skilled, and my parents blessed me with good genetics. As a freelance professional, I think that any time you are running a creative business that is unique to you, then it's tricky to make the leap from having other people support you with regular pay checks and a normal schedule to you creating that for yourself. You are the driving force behind your life, you need to take the bull by the horns and ride it all the way. Nobody is going to make the next deposit into your account unless you get your name out there, showing your initiative and a strong desire to do good work, I have heard that I am developing a reputation for being good at marketing and also for being very reliable and communicative. It's a good skill that makes me very approachable,“ smiled Sarah.

I then asked one of Sarah Elizabeth´s photographers Francesco Lardo at Creative Cantations (Frank) why he thought models are finding it harder to get paid work in Australia? Frank was passionate about his experiences explaining “The fact that contacts can be made via the social media as a primary means of communication allows one to be rapidly launched into the industry, practically overnight. In turn, as a consequence, it causes the already existing professional models to face the huge inundation that the social media infrastructure has created.“
I asked if his work with models promoted on social media is attracting the weekend camera buff who will focus on his last shoot and offer free services to his models just to have them as part of their portfolio? In Australia it is referred to as TFP work (Time For Prints). “Absolutely, It´s definitely a case of weekend camera buffs inundating the industry and affecting it to the point where the professional photographer is being cascaded in their own work. Photographers that have worked ten, twenty and even thirty years are being forced out of their profession from the impact that the weekend camera buff has generated. The global activity and profession that photography is may arguably be one of the most diverse in all of the creative arts. Be it commercial, bridal, product, lifestyle photography, etc. Everywhere, there are photographs on products, books, magazines, billboards and the internet. Having a regulatory body to maintain stable paid work for professional models would be a welcomed aspect to the industry. Implementing it is another story altogether, once again drawing on the fact of the sheer number of models which are now involved in the industry, paid or unpaid. Sarah markets herself well and stands out which comes from experience.“ Said Frank

“There is no doubt that social media makes everyone think they can be a food blogger, a photographer, or a model,“ Said Sarah. “There are a lot of smoke and mirrors at play. But you can't hide the spark of passion that you can see in very ripe and developing talent. This is why I love to work with up-and coming artists, as well as professionals. To be honest I don't care if you have been a make-up artist for one year or forty years, some people are naturally blessed with a talent. Age and experience can improve skill but it can also lead to burn out. I get excited when I'm working with those who see the artistry with fresh eyes. This is why I will always continue to work with students, to give them the opportunity to learn and improve. It's because they are so enthusiastic! On the other hand, paid work is definitely scarcer these days and highly competitive because many people are just volunteering their time for the experience, but I hope that won't just let money set limitations on making art. I prefer to work on teams that offer sufficient compensation to all members but I realize that these jobs are few and far between. I do accept the occasional collaboration project, if I believe it's a fair and equal Contribution by all team members and I feel I'll gain something from the opportunity, “said Sarah. My interview with this remarkable fashionista left me fascinated about her positive future , yet left me wondering just how much unpaid work is being asked of models in Australia. A model still needs to buy clothes, spend money at the hairdresser, buy makeup, nails, gym memberships, personal care such as waxing, eyebrows and skincare. The model still has to commute to the shoot, buy shoes, smile and work to create the perfect image pay for internet, mobile phone bills and rent and occasionally food. Maybe a regulatory authority is needed in this huge image market. Karl Lagerfeld once said , “The secret to modelling is not being perfect. What one needs is a face that people can identify in a second. You have to be given what´s needed by nature, and what´s needed is to bring something new.“ Namaste

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